

Congressman Bachus delivered this statement on the floor of the House of Representatives on October 30 in support of H.R. 2787, CJ's Home Protection Act.□ Bachus is the lead Republican sponsor of the legislation, which requires the installation of NOAA Weather Radios in all new manufacturing housing built or sold in the U.S.□ The bill was introduced by Rep. Brad Ellsworth (D-IN), and is based on an Indiana law that Kathryn Martin championed after her two-year-old son CJ lost his life in a tornado that struck Southwest Indiana in 2005.

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Congressman Ellsworth said a picture is worth a thousand words, and he held up a picture of CJ Martin. When the Congressman brought CJ's mother, Kathryn Martin, to my office, he brought that picture with him. It brought back memories to me of another picture, of not a little boy but a little girl, and I have that picture with me today.

This is a picture of Whitney Crowder. Unlike CJ, she survived the storm that swept away her home and today she is an eighth grader in a Tuscaloosa school.

She is doing well, but she had a lot to overcome.

Just like CJ, she and her family lived in manufactured housing.

Let me tell you, manufactured housing in the South has replaced a lot of substandard housing. It provides affordable housing for a lot of Alabamians.

As many as one out of five Alabamians lives in a manufactured house.

It is affordable.

It is clean, and it provides a very good home.

Whitney was living in one of

these manufactured houses. An alert went out that said a tornado was 30 miles off. She had approximately 20 minutes, but the TV wasn't on. She didn't have a weather alert radio.

And although the TV stations were able to track the storm and to tell within a quarter mile where it was going and when it would arrive there, she and her family didn't receive a warning.

Some people say, why don't you require these in cars? Why just in manufactured housing?

Well, in fact studies show when people are in cars they have the radio on and more often than not they receive an alert.

But as is the case in Alabama with this storm and another storm that took 32 lives a few years before that, people were asleep. I think the Martins were asleep. The

y had no idea that a killer tornado was bearing down on them, even though warnings were going out.

As I said, although I am happy to say that Whitney survived the tornado, her brother Wesley, 16-months-old, and her father did not. They were killed.

We have come to a time in our country where we really have no excuse not to do the few elementary things we can do to prevent the death or at least lessen the likelihood of the death of CJ Martin in Indiana or Wesley

Crowder and his dad,
Whitney's father, in Alabama.

Technology today in an F-5
or F-4 storm gives 30 to 40
minutes' warning.

With that warning, you need
only two things: You need
shelter from the storm, you
need a place to go, and you
need to receive that warning.

Now, in 2003 this Congress passed the Tornado Shelters Act, which allows communities to use community block grant money to build shelters, a shelter from the storm, a shelter that could exist for the Martins or the

Crowder family, and a mobile home community.

I am happy to report in my district, the Sixth Congressional

District of Alabama, we now have six of these shelters in or near manufactured housing communities. But people don't have to go to those.

If they are in manufactured housing, they can go to a nearby building with a basement

or interior room.

Manufactured housing, a mobile home as some of us call them, don't have basements or interior rooms.

It is not wrong; it is just something they are not designed to have.

But there are permanent structures nearby, whether it be a school, a tornado shelter that we authorized in 2003, or maybe even their parents' house.

The Crowders had an aunt and uncle that lived only about 400 yards away in a site-built house

with a basement.

They would have been safe from that storm.

The technology was there to warn them.

The shelter was there to receive them, but there was no weather radio.

Now, what's the
cost of a radio?

Some people have
talked about the cost

that you are imposing, although the manufactured housing industry as far as I know has said they support this bill.

Well, Wal-Mart just came out with a weather radio for \$12.

So that's the cost if you buy them in bulk.

You can put them in for \$12 in a mobile home, manufactured housing, \$12.

What is the cost of not acting?

For the Crowder family, there are all sorts of costs. The greatest cost was the loss of two individuals, a little 16-month-old boy, Whitney's little brother, and her father.

Also the cost to Whitney and her

mother and the 12
other people injured by
this storm.

The cost was several
million dollars in health
care costs.

Now, we are not here to save money; we are here to save lives. But this bill will not only save lives; it will save money.

A killer tornado like

this hit Oak Grove and killed 32.

An additional 250 were injured and among the things it did was paralyze a man who suffered paralysis and brain injuries which resulted

in disabilities and long periods of rehabilitation.

That gentleman's treatment alone totaled hundreds of thousands of dollars.

One radio in his home

could have saved him
a life of paralysis and
disability.

But instead, the
tornado took 32 lives
and denied him
mobility for the rest of
his life.

As the
Congressman from
Indiana said, this is
not about

Republicans or Democrats.

There are certain things we ought to say, it is time to do this; and technology has reached that time.

When 40 percent to

50 percent to
sometimes as many
as 60 percent of the
deaths every year
from these killer
tornadoes are in
mobile homes,
manufactured
housing, and our
families live in these

houses, whether
they be our
grandparents, our
parents, our children,
our neighbors, our
loved ones, or
people we don't
even know, you see
the devastation here.

There were site-built homes here.

This is a manufactured house.

Twenty-seven manufactured housing units in the area, a mobile home

community, no
longer existed.

As the

gentleman from
Indiana said,
looking at this
picture really
doesn't do it justice.

People actually
commented when
they came upon

this area which was about a half mile long and 400 yards wide, it looked like a garbage dump.

You couldn't tell there had been a community there.

It looked like there were a few junk cards because the cars were rolled over and over.

We can
rebuild these
communities; but
CJ, we can't bring
him back.

We can't bring Whitney's little brother and father back, but we can do our best for literally pennies to prevent some of these deaths.

I think that
is why 35 TV
stations

throughout this
Nation have
made this their
cause. Th
ey visited us in
Washington this
year.

They said, look,
we will get the
warning out and
there are shelters
available.

But please
require the

installation of a
\$12 radio so we
can bridge the
gap between
warning and safe
shelter.

That is
what we are here
to do today.

In this House
where we
sometimes are in
conflict and at
loggerheads,
can't we this time
come together in
a united way in

an effort that will
cost almost
nothing and
which the
manufactured
housing industry
said we are
willing to do this,

and require
these radios.

And not only
when a tornado
comes but when
a devastating
flood comes like

the one that
came to Texas
and people were
asleep in a
mobile home
community and
several of those
homes were

slept away.

This will save
lives.

So I
commend CJ
Martin's mother.

That's what
America is

about, someone
saying I lost my
son but I don't
want it to
happen again. It
is about the
Crowder family
who wrote me a

letter, a
grandmother
saying please
push this bill.

We will
never go back
and know
whether CJ
could have

survived had
this legislation
been passed.

We will never
know whether
Wesley

Crowder and his father would survive, but we do know by talking to people throughout the

United States
that these
radios have in
many, many
cases already
saved lives and
will save lives if

we install them
in
manufactured
housing.

We
have a shot at
significantly

reducing over
half the deaths
from tornadoes
simply by
taking the step
together
united,

Republicans
and
Democrats,
and passing
this legislation.

I
commend
Chairman

Frank for
expeditiously
moving this
legislation,
and I
commend the
Member from

Indiana for his
thoughtfulness
and his care
and dedication
to this issue.